

A

REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, August 16. 1711.

I confess myself very much an Unbeliever in the Story told us from several Parts, of the entire Defeat of the Turks and Swedish Forces, by the Muscovites—And yet I shall give my Thoughts of that Affair, as if it were true.

However, before I do so, I must give some Reasons, why I am doubtful of the Part.

My first Reason is, because of the Contradiction, Incongruities, Improbabilities, and absurd odd Expressions of it in the Relation, and of which I must

need say this, there may, indeed, be a Victory, or a Battle, or a Peace, but as the Letters Printed describe it, 'tis impossible to be true.— And our News-Paper-Men must Pardon me, if I explain some of the Absurdities of the Relation, at their Expence.

i. The Author of the Supplement begins with a Journal of his Czarish Majesty's Proceedings—First he tells us, His Majesty past'd the Neister with all his Troops, except some; *she is a most wise Account indeed* — And what think you was become of the rest? — *Why truly they were over already,*

ready, for they were gone to Moldavia, which is just over the Neisser.

Then he tells you the 5th, The Czar came to Jassy, where he was Receiv'd with all the Honour due to his Majesty, by the Hospodar of Walachia, who Conducted him to the Palace, where an Apartment had been prepar'd for him, and that the Hospodar offer'd him 6000 Oxen, 20000 Sheep, &c. Now it is manifest, the Hospodar of Walachia has no more to do in Jassy, than the King of France has to do at Amsterdam; but that Jassy is the Capital of Moldavia, and that Tergovire, which is the Hospodar of Walachia's Capital, is at least 160 Miles from Jassy; after this, he tells you the Muscovite Army has been join'd by 10000 Walachians, and it is hap'd the Moldavians will follow the Example — At best, this is all an Ignorant Confounding the Walachians for the Moldavians, and for that Reason, favours so much of a made Story, as I must confess, adds much to thy Suspicion.

But now to come to the Letters, which are said to come with Authority, and by Expresses, are notified by Envoys, and Ambassadors, written to Kings, and the like, as follows.

The Copy of a Letter Written by Mr. Bartel, Gouverneur of Fort Trinity in Poland, July 29. Note, he does not say to whom written.

N. B. This Letter is Printed in the Daily Courant, Aug. 13.

Fieſt, Fort Trinity is in Podolia, not Poland, but as it is in the Dominion of the King of Poland, that's a Mistake may be pass'd over — He writes thus, I let you hereby know, that the Turks have been entirely Defeated in a Battle which they have had with the Muscovites, and that this Defeat was follow'd by a Peace between the two Nations; I exhort his Czarian Maj. By here in three Days, having pass'd the BORISTHENES at ZWANEC, and will soon be follow'd by the whole Army.

Firſt, It is odd the Muscovites being within three Days of him, he should not mention when, or where this Battle was fought, neither do any of the Letters say one Word, of either the Time or Place, at leaſt, that is Congruous; but of this by the br-

2dly, As to passing the Boristhenes at Zwanies, here's another fatal Mistake, which smells of a made Story; The Battle was near the Danube, the Letter is written near the Neisser; the Czar is coming back from the Danube to the Neisser, and has pass'd the Boristhenes in his Way; this is just as if a Person coming from the River Tyne in Northumberland, to Nottingham on the Trent, should pass the Thames in his Way — For the Boristhenes is at leaſt, two Hundred Miles from the Danube; and Fort Trinity, from whence this Letter is written, is much about half Way between them.

But to return to the Time of the Battle, and the Place also.

The wife Letter above, says thus. — When the Enemy pass'd the Danube, his Majesty with his Army was on the side the Pruth, but as soon as they were COME, (Mark that) he pass'd this River and Engag'd them; this is a most unaccountable Description indeed — As soon as they were come, but no Body knows whither.

Then he says of the Battle, He Engag'd them, holding a Battle with them for three Days, wherein they were entirely Defeated, and begg'd Peace, which was granted — Indeed they might well beg Peace, if they were entirely Defeated, and the granting Peace on the Field of Battle, upon the entire Defeat of the whole Turkish Army, is as likely as their staying there to beg for it.

2. Another Writer who gives us the same Letter, Prints it in a quite different manner; and I believe the Reason to be this;

he found the other so gross, he was ashamed of it, and therefore puts it into better Form, tho' of his own, to make Sense of it — He says thus ; *He, his Majesty, attack'd them (the Turks) the 22d, immediately after passing the Danube, and fought them three Days together, and he was pass'd the River, suppose that to be the Nisster, which is the most favourable guess, the 29th, and would be at Fort Trinity in three Days.*

Now mark but the Probabilities and Calculations here — He attack'd them immediately on their passing the *Danube*, and yet we had an Account some time, that the *Turks* were Entrench'd on the *Danube*, having pass'd that River a long Time before : (of which by himself) But now for the Calculation of Time — They attack'd them the 22d, they fought three Days, that is, to the 24th — From the *Danube* to the *Zwannerie* is at least 140 Miles back again, it can hardly be imagin'd the Czar's Army could be return'd thither by the 29th, no, not if they had ~~had~~ as fast as the Rooted Turks — And another Letter says, the Peace was made 3 Days after the Battle ; How can these Things be possible ?

Such monstrous Things as these were never done before, nor will ever be done again.

For an Army after a Fatigue of 3 Days severe Battle, and after an entire Victory, to be retir'd 140 Miles back again in four Days after the Action, this is such a piece of Stuff, that let any Man prove to me, that the Battle being on the *Danube* the 22d, the Czar was at *Zwannerie* on the *Nisster* the 29th, the Letter relates, I'll venture a Hundred to one, that instead of a Victory over the *Turks*, he was run away from them — .

3. It is farther to be noted, that these Letters are so variously render'd, that almost every Print has a differing Account from them ; the most Authentick that I have seen, seems to be in the Post-Man, which mentions both the Place of Battle and the Day ; yet even these Letters say in one Place, the Fight was as soon as the *Turks* had pass'd the *Danube*, and in another

place, that it was at *Valgim* on the *Danube*, which at least, must be 30 or 40 Miles from the *Danube* ; so that in all the Accounts, there seems a medley of Contradiction and Impossibility ; and if these Letters have Truth in them, and such a Battle has been fought, it must be observ'd, that tho' it may have been well fought, it has been as ill op'd, as ever an Action of that kind has been.

I omit the unlikely Story of her Majesty of *Mussoy* being in the Battle, a story one would think which was rather told for a Joke than any thing else..

I could go on with these Ridiculous Things, the length of another Paper, but it is not worth while ; I give you these, as I said at first, only to shew you the Reason of my own diffidence in these Accounts ; from all which Things put together, I add how much of all this I take to be probable, and which, as I believe, I think I have as much Faith as comes to my Share,

The *Suedes* gave the first News of a Battle in General, and they declare, they had the Victory ; but I must own, from the Czar's repelling the River at *Zwannerie*, within four Days of the Battle, I am almost encl'd to believe there may be something in it ; only indeed the Post-Man's Account tells, the Czar promises to be at *Zwannerie* in a little Time — So that all is differing, uncertain, and inconsistent with one another.

Indeed, it has many Times fallen out nearer Home than the *Nisster*, that two Armies have fought stoutly, and both gone away with the Notion of a Victory, either Side singing *Te Deum*, the Victors being forc'd to run away, and the Vanquish'd pursuing — And it seems to me, that Something like this has happen'd here : That a Treaty may have been made, does not altogether disagree with one MSS. from *Constantinople*, viz. That the Polish Ambassador at the Port, was permitted to follow the *Turks* ; That a bloody Action has hap-

happened, I am not backward to allow, and am fitt inclin'd to think both Armies are still in being, and both claim the Victory, the rest is all improbable; how should they Treat, after an entire Overthrow? We know the Turks on an Overthrow disperse immediately; their Hosts are fleet, and generally make off; the Janissaries generally are cut in pieces on the Spot, they seldom fly, and an entire Overthrow would have left no Room for a Treaty, nor could a compleat Treaty, between two such mighty Empires, be made on the Field of Battle: — The Grand Vizier after a bloody Action between some part of the Armies, for I am perswaded the whole were not engag'd, might, by the Interposition of the Polish Envoy, propose a Truce: — But

an entire Defeat first, and then a Peace on the Spot, is as unlikely, as that the Grand Vizier was to wait on the Czar at Zwanies, which is another piece of News, and if it be true, is what was never heard of before, or the like of it.

I shall suspend my farther Thoughts of this, till the Lame Post arrives, and so I would advise you all to do — Mean Time, I shall, as I said above, make some Observations upon it, as if it were true, that the Muscovites had the Victory; in which Case I must own, that unless the Swedes are included in the Treaty, which as it is laid they have made, it will be hard to say whether Europe shall have Cause to rejoice at it or no.

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